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An Interview

With Allen Dulles

'It's The Most Lawless World I Have Known In My Lifetime'

For eight years, from 1953 to 1961, Allen Welsh Dulles was America's top spy, and, as director of Central Intelligence, presided over a fantastic growth of the U.S. spying apparatus as the nation groped for means to combat an ever-increasing threat from Communist espionage and subversion. Though the former diplomat and wartime OSS official is now retired at 72, he still keeps an interest in the Red menace and continues to serve his government; since retiring, he has served on commissions investigating the assassination of President Kennedy, the danger of proliferation of nuclear weapons and racial tensions in Mississippi. Dulles was in San Diego recently on still another mission—promoting the law, as a guest of the San Diego County Bar Association. While here, he was interviewed by a board of editors of The San Diego Union. His answers:

Q. As a lawyer and as former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, what do you think of the state of law in the world today?

A. There is more lawlessness around the world than any time I've known in my lifetime, and that goes back over 50 years — international lawlessness. I'm talking about Viet Nam and I'm talking about a good many other things.

Q. Is this a surprise to you, or did you anticipate it after your work in the CIA?

A. I don't think I anticipated that it would get quite as bad as it has become in recent years.

Q. What do you attribute some of this increase to?

A. The Communists are at the back of a good deal of it. And they have handled the thing in a very clever way as they have in Viet Nam, and tried to get us involved in very difficult situations. I think that identifies probably the most dangerous situation we face at the present time.

Q. What tactic do you think the Communists have adopted as their basic method of conquest? What is the biggest danger from communism today?

A. They have defined it many times. It has been done at various party congresses. Khrushchev did it in a number of very important speeches. One I remember particularly was a speech on Jan. 6, 1961, when he said they were going to persist with his policies of subversion and wars of liberation, and they would support those trying to overthrow what the Communists call capitalistic government. We're the arch-capitalist in their view. And, where they find targets of opportunity, they move in, as they did in Cuba, as they are trying to do now in Viet Nam, as they are planning to do in Southeast Asia generally, as they have in Indonesia, which is one of the most dangerous situations we have today after Viet Nam.

Q. Then you think the United States faces increased danger?

A. Yes, I do, definitely so, because, if we should falter or fail in Viet Nam, that would be the greatest victory the Communists have won, even greater than Cuba, in my opinion.

Q. Are our intelligence activities keeping pace with the increased danger?

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A. I retired as director of central intelligence in November, 1961, and since then I've had no official position in connection with intelligence. But, naturally, after having worked in intelligence for many years, you don't drop your interest in it overnight and I did not drop my interest in it. And I, of course, have many friends in the agency and from time to time they do consult me but there is no formal relationship and I prefer not to have one. We have now a new director (Vice Adm. William F. Raborn), and I think a very able man.

Q. In Viet Nam, a number of Communist agents are operating in areas controlled by the South Vietnamese. They bombed our embassy and have succeeded in other sabotage-terrorist activities. But we see few reports of similar activity in areas controlled by the Viet Cong. What are our principal difficulties in duplicating that type of infiltration?

A. Well, if you went to Southern Viet Nam or Northern Viet Nam, you'd stick out as being someone who wasn't really from the area and you wouldn't be taken for a Vietnamese. They can use people from either side of the line. They may have different ideologies, different motives, but they all look alike, and it's very hard to tell the good from the bad, the Communists from the others. That's why this is such a very difficult problem. It is an ideal place to fight a guerrilla battle.

Q. Reports I've seen indicate at least some of the Communists' spies in Viet Nam are motivated by money, not necessarily ideology. We have money to motivate the people that way, too, but could we be doing it as effectively?

A. I don't think money acts as a major incentive in this situation. It would be much easier to deal with them if it did. We could outmatch them as far as money is concerned, but the Communists have succeeded—we must recognize that—that's one of the dangers of the movement. They have convinced themselves and are trying to convince the world they are going to take over that area. And a great many of them have been trained by the Communists and are motivated to be Communists and are Communists. I think one reason why we've had as much difficulty as we've had is because we've failed to realize the deep danger that lies because of their motivation.

Q. Why can the Communists motivate and we apparently cannot?

A. I think we are able to motivate. In many cases we have done that, but in some cases they have been more successful than we have.

Q. Our position in this fight against the Communists is a major position. Is it being hurt by manifestations of lawlessness in the South and throughout the country?

A. Yes, I think it is to some extent, because that hurts our image. It weakens our image, and when your image is weakened your power is to some extent weakened.

Q. Isn't this a major challenge to the legal profession today?

A. A major challenge, yes.



'Communists are back of a good deal of the lawlessness.'



'I'm retired, practicing law, writing, talking—maybe too much.'

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U2: 'Effective And Important'

Q. Looking back at the U2 episode, were we in the same situation again, would you still favor U2 flights over the Soviet Union?

A. No, I wouldn't, because now we know it can be shot down. When we started with the U2, we were quite candid in predicting that sooner or later they would have a missile which would shoot it down.

Q. We did not know beforehand that they had the capability of shooting it down?

A. For awhile, they didn't have. When it started, those of us who were working on it clearly realized that this particular method of reconnaissance with this particular vehicle had a definite life. Now we didn't know whether that life was three years, four years, five years, what it was. But we realized that the capability could within a matter of a few years be developed that would meet it at its altitude.

Q. It was shot down at its altitude and not lower?

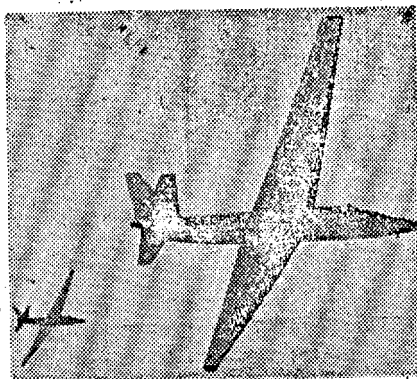
A. We don't know definitely that it was shot down, but from an analysis of the testimony of Gary Francis Powers, the pilot, it would appear that it was a near-miss, but a near-miss that created such turbulence that it dislocated some of the ailerons and the tail of the plane so that he couldn't control the plane. If the plane had been hit, it would have pretty well disintegrated. It didn't disintegrate, but, as I recall the testimony, there was an explosion near the plane and after that explosion he lost the ability to control the plane.

Q. It was an effective intelligence weapon until...

A. Very effective and very important. It persuaded us that the Soviet had reached a competence in the field of missiles which I think had a great deal to do with the vigorous program of manufacturing and making missiles, including the Polaris, and that, if we had not had good intelligence on what the Soviet was accomplishing, we certainly would not have done that as quickly and as effectively as we did.

Q. Did you have any knowledge of the two new rulers of the Soviet Union?

A. We knew about their history as important members of the Presidium—the ruling council of the Soviet Union. I did not know, but again, I was not



THE U2: 'Powers incident' speeded up the Polaris.'

in the agency... as far as I know the intelligence did not have definite information that Nikita Khrushchev was going to be displaced. And I don't think that's so surprising because it's pretty clear Mr. Khrushchev himself didn't know it.

Q. In view of our present techniques, do you think another Pearl Harbor would be possible? Or World War III to occur without any advance knowledge to us?

A. That's a very hard question to answer in the days when one has—and we believe the Russians have—quite a large number of missiles in fixed sights in various areas in the Communist world. I don't think one can say with assurance that one could predict a week, 10 days, three weeks, a month, two months ahead of time that on a certain day they were going to detonate these missiles. I don't think one could say that with assurance. One believes, however, that there is very little likelihood that could be done except under conditions of a good deal of attention. I think myself that it is unlikely that just one morning, tomorrow morning, they'll get up and shoot these missiles at us. I think one has to watch the periods of tension and when there is a serious period of tension... there's some tension at the present time. I think that most of us, at least when I left the agency, felt that they did not want to provoke a nuclear war. Even if they had a certain advantage by making the first strike, it wouldn't be conclusive.

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Warren Report: 'Facts Stand Up'

Q. Have any criticisms of the Warren Report changed your opinion as to its conclusions?

A. No, I think nothing has been said or written that seems to me to invalidate any of the conclusions of the report. I've read, I think, practically all that has been written. By and large, I think it stood up extremely well. You can differ, and I understand that people can differ and lawyers can differ as to how a commission of that kind should operate, in dealing with witnesses, for example. We did not attempt to apply all the strict laws of evidence, in the way of excluding evidence, because this was not a trial. We were trying to get at the facts and we interrogated everybody we thought could add any facts to the situation and we put all that evidence and published it all, practically all of it, all that seemed pertinent. In the 26 volumes, I think we disproved a great many theories that have been publicized. I think every one of us on the commission stands by the report as written.

Q. Some have criticized your criticism of one magazine article, saying it seemed you were more interested in disproving the author and the theories of other authors than you were in finding the truth. How do you feel about this?

A. No, I don't think that is true. If you're working on a report of this kind and a critic presents a theory, you study it. But I don't think we gave undue attention to it. In the report, there is a section where we summarize, point by point, 40 or 50, I guess, allegations and present our views. But I don't think we gave undue weight to it.

Q. Was there complete unanimity among all members of the commission in the final report?

A. Yes, there was, on all of our recommendations. On some of the details we had some differences of opinion, but they weren't very important.

Q. If you had had the opportunity, would you have used a staff of independent investigators rather than governmental investigators?

A. No, I wouldn't have. Where are you going to get trained people? The best-trained people in this country are the FBI; it was obviously the best equipped to carry out interrogations and they were there in the Department of Justice, and I think they did a splendid job.

Q. Do you think the commission's recommendations for protection of the President are being implemented?

A. Yes, I think they are. There is the problem, "What will the President tolerate?" I gather from what I read in the paper that President Johnson doesn't want this automobile that we recommended, this armored car. The President is the President and he has the authority and I think he is going to be quite reasonable about it.

Q. One criticism of the United States is that the President does have to have such extensive bodyguards and that in countries like England and to some degree France and the Scandinavian countries the ruler or executive head can move around with almost no protection. Do you have any idea why this is?

A. The President is the most marked man in the world because he is the man who has the greatest authority of any individual in the world. It would be interesting if you traced the motivation and what was in Oswald's mind. As far as we can tell, he was striking at authority. He thought authority in the United States, maybe in the world, was wrong, that the concentration of power in the hands of one man in this way was wrong. I don't know how you can run governments without it but still he apparently had that idea and that's why he shot the President, in my opinion, because he wanted to hit authority. We couldn't find an iota of evidence that Oswald had any personal motivation against Kennedy. As an individual, he liked him. But, as representing the man with the greatest power in the world, he didn't like him.

Q. Did you conclude that he also meant to strike at Texas Gov. John Connally for the same reason?

A. I don't think so. We didn't really go into that. But I've always thought personally he hit Gov. Connally because he was in the line of fire.



OSWALD: 'We think he was striking at authority.'



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CIA: 'A Policy Influence'

Q. In recent years, activities and organization of the CIA have been discussed widely as you have gained strength. You, of course, follow policy, not make it, but if given a choice should the CIA direct such operations as the Bay of Pigs? Is it essential to the function of the CIA that it be an operational director?

A. No, but I think it is essential that the CIA do that part of the work which the policymaking heads of our government decide it should do. If we're going to meet the subversive tactics of the Communists, we've got to use all the assets we have, and that's one of the assets. Take the Bay of Pigs—that wasn't something I thought of—that was something that was in every detail approved by the people at the head of policy and originally by the Joint Chiefs of Staff because of the military nature of it. Now a good many of these things have to be done under some kind of cover, as you can't advertise your acts beforehand, because that just alerts the enemy as to where you're going to act and what you're going to do. It has to be, therefore, to some extent a secret, and that is the reason that for years the CIA was designated—and Harry Truman was one of those who was responsible for starting it following the problem in Greece when the Truman Doctrine was enunciated—from that time on the CIA has had a charter in this field if and when it was asked to do so by the policymaking people. Now that doesn't mean it is always going to succeed. A great many times you don't succeed. But if you don't do anything—if you haven't an action agency that you can put in some of these situations—we have very little chance of winning in many of the problems around the world.

Q. Was Guatemala an example of how you could do this successfully under cover?

A. It depends on how large the operation is. You sometimes can do it pretty well under cover. The Guatemalan operation—it's in President Eisenhower's book; you can read about it there—that was successful, and I think it prevented Guatemala from being taken over by the Communists. Now if you win it doesn't make so very much difference whether your cover is blown or not because you get the advantage of victory and victory changes people's opinions a good deal. If you fail, then it can be embarrassing to the government and it can be difficult.

But every country has done this. The landing in North Africa was one of the most effective covert actions as ever was carried out and it was one turning the whole tide against the Nazis.

Q. Should we be doing more of this type of activity?

A. I think it should be done wherever decided by the policymakers. The CIA doesn't make policy. Now I know you may not quite believe this. It may affect policy, because if action is taken on the basis of the estimates of the intelligence officer, it looks as though he is making policy because if the intelligence comes out and says country X is going Communist or is threatened with going Communist unless some action is taken—that was the case in Cuba, it was the case in Guatemala, it was the case in Iran, it was the case in many other countries. Now then, if the government decides to do something, then everybody says, "The CIA mounted this whole business," and so forth. They did what their function was: to find out the facts. Now if as a result of those facts the government decides some action should be taken and assigns a certain part of it to the intelligence apparatus of government, the intelligence apparatus has to do that. It is under the President and the National Security Council, and it follows their orders. They are the ones who decide whether the action should be taken. I would be the last to deny that intelligence reports have an influence on policy, because they do, but the decision as to whether you act—that decision is in the hands of the President, secretary of state, secretary of defense and the National Security Council under the law.

Q. Compared with the intelligence organizations of other countries, we're really new in this field. How does our apparatus stack up now with those of countries that have been in the field longer?

A. Intelligence operations are really a matter of the intelligence and training of the people who go into them. If you get intelligent people, an intelligent American can do a job just as well and generally better than almost any other country. Sometimes being too old in it is bad. Some intelligence services never change tactics, although operations change. They changed after World War I, and they changed again after the nuclear element came in. If you're not able to adapt your intelligence techniques to a changing situation despite all the precedents and all that you find in the rule books, you're going to fail.



'Every detail of Bay of Pigs was approved by policymakers.'

Q. Is our intelligence operation today as effective as those of other leading countries?

A. How can you reach a judgment on that? I don't know. As far as personnel is concerned, I think we've got as fine a people in our intelligence agency as any country, bar none. They generally get more in the way of support than others do. We have more money than most countries, probably spend more on intelligence than others except for the Russians. They may spend the most of any. It's hard to tell how much the Russians spend. But I think we can have the best intelligence service in the world.

Q. Have you read, "The Spy Who Came in From the Cold?"

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it's a good representation of intelligence?

A. I personally didn't get very thrilled by it to some extent. But any book which sells as well as much as it does must have a lot of merit some way or other.

Q. Were you fooled by the plot?

A. I saw through fairly early the disguise of the fellow who made himself into a bum in order to have better cover. That was quite well done, I thought, and was quite true to life.